

Planning Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on 11 September 2020

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Present

Melanie Vigo di Gallidoro – in the Chair, Harry Blathwayt, Stephen Bolt, Bill Dickson, Andree Gee, Gail Harris (items 1-10), Lana Hemsall (items 1-10), Tim Jickells, Bruce Keith, James Knight (items 1-11), Leslie Mogford, Vic Thomson (items 1-12).

In attendance

Natalie Beal – Planning Policy Officer, Essie Guds – Governance Officer (meeting moderator), Kate Knights – Historic Environment Manager, Jack Ibbotson – Planning Officer, Kayleigh Judson – Heritage Planning Officer, Cheryl Peel – Senior Planning Officer, Marie-Pierre Tighe – Director of Strategic Services, Lewis Treloar – Waterways and Recreation Officer (item 8.3), Maria Conti – Head of Governance (minute taker), Sarah Mullarney – Governance Officer (meeting moderator).

1. Apologies and welcome

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies were received from Fran Whymark.

Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014

The Chairman explained that the meeting would be held remotely in accordance with the Coronavirus Regulations 2020 and the Standing Orders for remote meetings agreed by the Broads Authority on 22 May 2020. The meeting would be live streamed and recorded and the Authority retained the copyright. The minutes remained the record of the meeting.

2. Declarations of interest and introductions

Members and officers introduced themselves. There were no declarations of interest in addition to those already registered.

3. Minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 August 2020 were approved as a correct record and would be signed by the Chairman.

4. Points of information arising from the minutes

The Senior Planning Officer reported that the Authority was waiting for North Norfolk District Council's Planning Committee to consider the Ludham Conservation Area appraisal, which the member for that Council added may be at their November meeting.

5. Matters of urgent business

There were no items of urgent business.

6. Chair's announcements and introduction to public speaking

There were no announcements, and no requests for public speaking had been received.

7. Requests to defer applications and/or vary agenda order

No requests to defer or vary the order of the agenda had been received.

8. Applications for planning permission

The Committee considered the following applications submitted under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (also having regard to Human Rights), and reached the decisions set out below. Acting under its delegated powers, the Committee authorised the immediate implementation of the decisions.

The following minutes relate to additional matters of information or detailed matters of policy not already covered in the officer's report, which were given additional attention.

(1) BA/2020/0227/FUL and BA/2020/0228/LBC, Mutton's Mill, Stones Road, Halvergate

Proposal: Comprehensive structural and mechanical repairs to drainage mill, including underpinning and internal and external refurbishment work. Applicant: Water, Mills and Marshes Landscape Partnership Scheme

(2) BA/2020/0231/FUL and BA/2020/0232/LBC, High's Mill, Stone Road, Halvergate

Proposal: Underpinning works to internal machinery, reinstatement of historic features and internal and external repairs. Applicant: Water, Mills and Marshes Landscape Partnership Scheme

The Heritage Planning Officer presented four applications submitted as part of the Water, Mills and Marshes Landscape Partnership Scheme. The report covered two applications at Mutton's Mill and two at High's Mill.

The proposals for Mutton's Mill were for comprehensive structural and mechanical repairs, including underpinning and internal and external refurbishment work, with the aim of returning the mill to a sound structural and mechanical condition and allowing it to operate as it was originally designed. The proposals for High's Mill were for underpinning works to internal machinery, reinstatement of historic features, and internal and external repairs, to conserve the structure.

In terms of consultation responses (section 4 of the report), it was reported that Historic England no longer had reservations about the proposed underpinning of Mutton's Mill. The Heritage Planning Officer also advised the recommendation of an additional condition for both Listed Building Consents covering details of all replacement/repair of all metalwork to be agreed.

In response to a member's question, the Heritage Planning Officer stated that Mutton's Mill would be underpinned by a series of small concrete rafts on piles around the perimeter of the tower, supported with mini piles on either side. Tests had been carried out at the mill to see how far the piles would need to be embedded into the ground.

A member asked how many planning applications for mill restoration were likely to be made through the Water, Mills and Marshes scheme. He also asked about the ongoing maintenance and expected lifespan of the restored structures.

The Historic Environment Manager replied that projects were ongoing at Six Mile House, North Mill, Strumpshaw Engine House and Oby Mill. In addition to the applications for Mutton's Mill and High's Mill, it was intended to submit proposals for Herringfleet Mill, Caldicott Mill and Stone's Mill over the next couple of years. Once works on each mill were completed, ongoing maintenance would be the responsibility of the individual mill owner, as all the mills were in private ownership. However, part of the Water, Mills and Marshes legacy planning was to work with other organisations to continue a similar type of scheme, and perhaps have volunteer mill wardens. In terms of lifespan, the repairs should keep the structures in good order for 20-30 years, although their exposure to the elements meant that ongoing maintenance would be necessary, hence the need at this stage for fundamental works such as underpinning. It was noted that the mills were not originally built to last a long time, so it was amazing they had survived.

A member asked if mill sails could be replaced where possible, as this was an iconic feature of these structures. It was noted that sails would be reinstated on Mutton's Mill and on Herringfleet Mill, but this was not feasible for the other structures because of their poor condition and the weight of the sails. Another member asked if the mills with working sails could be used to generate electricity for the nearby internal drainage mills. The Historic Environment Manager noted that the Mutton's Mill proposal included connecting the raceway to the dyke, although it was unlikely this would be implemented at the moment as it was a considerable undertaking.

In response to a member's questions about bats, the Historic Environment Manager noted that bats were using Mutton's Mill and High's Mill for foraging, but not for roosting. As part of the proposed works, external bat boxes would be installed at both sites, and Mutton's Mill would have gaps in the brickwork to allow them access.

A member commented that the Authority's planning policy approach should consider how to help owners make the mills economically viable so they did not have to be so reliant on funding support. In terms of funding streams, the Chair invited members to suggest potential sources for future work. It was noted that the Authority was already working with Norfolk Windmills Trust, who would hopefully continue to play an active role.

The Chair summed up the Committee's strong support for these proposals, and for the overall aim of the Water, Mills and Marshes scheme to restore these important features of the Broads' landscape.

Andree Gee proposed, seconded by Gail Harris, and

It was resolved, by 11 votes in favour and 1 abstention, to approve the applications listed above for (1) Mutton's Mill and (2) High's Mill, subject to the conditions outlined in the report and the additional condition covering details of all replacement/repair of all

metalwork. The application is considered to be in accordance with Policies SP5, DM5, DM11, DM13, DM21, DM43 and SSMILLS of the Broads Local Plan.

**(3) BA/2020/0146/FUL Petos Marsh, Burnt Hill Lane, Carlton Colville
Installation of 25m floating mooring pontoon to be used as short stay 24-hour moorings.
Applicant: Mr Lewis Treloar on behalf of the Broads Authority.**

The Planning Officer presented this application to install a 25m floating mooring pontoon parallel with the west bank of Oulton Dyke. Suffolk Wildlife Trust (SWT) proposed to link this mooring by way of a riverbank permissive footpath to the existing footpath network on Carlton Marshes.

A member asked if there were plans for any screening between the proposed mooring and the SWT reserve. The Planning Officer replied that neither SWT nor the Authority's Ecologist had asked for this, and a member added that the flood wall between the reserve and the river acted as a screen. There were several bird hides on the reserve, and the Waterways and Recreation Officer reported that preliminary discussions were taking place about possibly installing a hide on the flood bank.

Members voiced their approval for Suffolk Wildlife Trust's project at Peto's Marsh, and the Chair suggested the area for a Members' Annual Site Visit.

Tim Jickells proposed, seconded by James Knight, and

It was resolved unanimously to approve the application subject to the conditions outlined in the report. The application is considered to be in accordance with Policies DM5, DM13, DM31, DM33, DM43 and DM46 of the Broads Local Plan.

9. Enforcement update

Members received the update report on enforcement matters previously referred to the Committee, and the Senior Planning Officer gave the additional following updates:

- Former Marina Keys: Application received for discharge of some conditions and agent contacted about outstanding conditions
- Beauchamp Arms: Enforcement visit postponed to this month
- Blackgate Farm: BA has until 12 October to submit statement for appeal and will then await hearing date.
- Ditchingham Maltings: Permission granted in August for revised landscaping scheme; works required to be carried out between October 2020 and March 2021.

The report was noted.

10. Consultation from MHCLG – Changes to the current planning system

The Planning Policy Officer (PPO) introduced the report on the Government consultation on proposed measures to improve the effectiveness of the planning system. The Government

was consulting on four changes, namely how housing need figures are calculated, changes to affordable housing thresholds, introducing a new type of affordable housing, and extending Permission in Principle. The changes would come forward as amendments to the NPPG and it was proposed these could be in place by the end of 2020. The consultation deadline was 1 October, and the PPO summarised the Authority's proposed response and invited members' comments.

The PPO also noted a second Government consultation called 'Planning for the Future', which proposed significant and fundamental structural changes to the planning system. The deadline for this consultation was 29 October 2020, and a report on the proposed changes and the Authority's proposed response would be presented to the next Planning Committee.

A member noted the Authority's proposed response to questions 1-7 (outlined in Appendix 1 to the report), which implied the need for infrastructure to support new housing development. The PPO replied that there could be pressure on finding less suitable sites, and public transport infrastructure would be a consideration. The district planning authorities included this in their criteria for assessing proposed sites.

A member asked if the standard methodology for assessing housing need might be challenged by planning professionals. The PPO noted that the methodology did not apply directly to the Broads Authority, but could impact the next Local Plan and was an issue for discussion with the district planning authorities when the current Local Plan was reviewed. It was noted that this issue might be raised in responses to the 'Planning for the Future' consultation.

A member asked if the Authority was aware how dramatically the methodology would change housing numbers across other districts. The member referred to a proposed SHMA that the Authority should contribute to, and considered that the Authority's consultation response at paragraph 2.9 of the report should be more robust.

The PPO replied that the report included the housing numbers the districts could have and, while the Authority's consultation response acknowledged this as a pressure on the Broads, it could be strengthened if members wished. The proposed SHMA was more of a needs study to look at the housing mix for most of the districts. The PPO was on the project group and had seen the brief, but the Authority had not contributed financially because its Local Plan was adopted recently and it did not need updated housing figures at this stage, especially in light of the potential change to the standard methodology. The Authority might commission a piece of work on how to calculate its own housing number as part of preparing the next Local Plan, in consultation with the districts. The Director of Strategic Services added that the Authority was involved in the Greater Norwich Local Plan partnership and there was a meeting with directors next week.

The member was invited to propose new wording for the response at paragraph 2.9 in the report, but replied that the response needed to be signed off by the Committee. As the consultation deadline was 1 October, it was suggested that the proposed rewording was circulated to members and the final sign off delegated to the Director of Strategic Services, the Chair and Vice-Chair of Planning Committee and the Chair of the Authority.

The Chair of the Authority questioned why proposed new wording had not been submitted sooner for discussion at this meeting. The member said she had difficulty reading the agenda papers on her accessibility reader, and asked if the formatting of the papers had changed, adding that she had emailed the Governance team but had not had a response. The Governance Officer confirmed that there had been no formatting changes to the agenda papers, and apologised to the member as the team had not received an email on this matter. The team was happy to liaise directly with the member outside the meeting to address any issues with accessing the electronic agenda papers. The Chair also asked if the member was able to print off the papers.

Another member commented that the point of committee meetings was to allow members to discuss such issues and propose any changes, rather than simply to accept officer recommendations.

Stephen Bolt proposed, seconded by Andree Gee, and

It was resolved unanimously that the member's proposed rewording of the Authority's response in paragraph 2.9 of the report would be circulated for comment to all Committee members, and that the final sign off of the consultation response would be delegated to the Director of Strategic Services, the Chair and Vice-Chair of Planning Committee and the Chair of the Authority.

Lana Hemsall left the meeting.

Harry Blathwayt proposed, seconded Andree Gee, and

It was resolved unanimously to approve the proposed consultation response at paragraph 4.5 of the report.

Gail Harris left the meeting.

11. Planning policy – draft Residential Moorings Guide

Members received a report on the revised draft Residential Moorings Guide. The guide was being produced to help implement the Local Plan policies relating to residential moorings.

A member commented that the document was presented as a planning document, but was mainly general guidance on how to develop well managed moorings. He felt that developers may be put off by the amount of information in the guide. The Planning Policy Officer replied that the Local Plan policy set the planning application criteria for developers. The purpose of the guide was to address each of those criteria in more detail, with case studies and templates, as a way of providing advice and helping developers to interpret the policy.

A member suggested that the final guide should include the Local Plan policy criteria in an appendix, and this idea was supported.

Tim Jickells proposed, seconded by Bill Dickson, and

It was resolved unanimously to endorse the revised Residential Moorings Guide and to recommend it to the Broads Authority for public consultation.

James Knight left the meeting.

12. Planning policy – guide to understanding and addressing the impacts of new developments on peat soil

The Planning Policy Officer introduced her report on a proposed guide to help with the implementation of the policy on peat in the Broads Local Plan. The policy seeks a reduction in the amount of peat that is excavated as part of a development proposal. If peat is excavated, it requires that the special characteristics of the peat are assessed, recorded and considered when disposing of it.

A member asked about proposals to harvest and sell peat, and was advised that the Authority had no such plans. On the contrary, the Authority's objective was to protect the peat and keep it wet. This was evidenced with the CANAPE project, which included paludiculture (wetland agriculture) and biochar initiatives, and the Climate Change Action Plan, both of which were focused on protecting peat and managing wetlands.

A member endorsed the guide, but said while it focused on the disposal of peat in beneficial ways, it did not also mention the Authority's policies on increasing the amount of peat, or offsetting to compensate for peat loss. He suggested changing the guide's title to make this clear. The PPO noted that this document was about reducing peat loss in the first instance, but agreed that the guide's title could be changed for clarity.

A member commented on the difficulties in managing peat, due to its volatile nature. There were many innovative ways to use peat and keep it wet, including the establishment of peat banks.

Members expressed support for the Peat Guide.

Leslie Mogford proposed, seconded by Bruce Keith, and

It was resolved unanimously to endorse the Peat Guide and to recommend it to the Broads Authority for public consultation.

Vic Thompson left the meeting.

13. Filby Neighbourhood Plan

Members received a report outlining the Authority's proposed response to Filby Parish Council's consultation on the pre-submission draft of the Filby Neighbourhood Plan.

Tim Jickells proposed, seconded by Harry Blathwayt, and

It was resolved unanimously to endorse the proposed response to the pre-submission consultation on the Filby Neighbourhood Plan.

14. Appeals to the Secretary of State

The Committee received the latest schedule of appeals to the Secretary of State since January 2020. The Senior Planning Officer also reported the following updates:

- Black Gate Farm: Appeal started, statement to be submitted by 12 October.
- Land east of Brograve, Mill Coast Road: Statement to be submitted by 6 October.
- Gunton Lodge, Oulton Broad: New appeal, start date awaited.

The report was noted.

15. Decisions made by officers under delegated powers

The Committee received a schedule of decisions made by officers under delegated powers from 1 August to 20 August 2020.

The report was noted.

16. Date of next meeting

The next meeting of the Planning Committee would be on Friday 9 October 2020 at 10.00am. The meeting would be held remotely.

The meeting ended at 12.47pm.

Signed by

Chairman